

## **FOCUS SECTION**

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# **HIRING AND RETAINING HIGH-QUALITY TEACHERS: WHAT PRINCIPALS CAN DO**

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*Many Catholic school principals have limited assistance from their respective central offices in the recruitment and selection of teachers, especially if their objective is to recruit candidates of color or candidates for a particular subject area. Aware that teacher quality is related to student achievement, Catholic school principals must employ up-to-date, effective recruitment and hiring strategies to compete for qualified candidates in today's market. Mindful that teacher recruitment programs alone will not solve staffing problems, principals must remain vigilant for causes of low retention and strategize to retain their high-quality teachers. Implementing an intensive induction and mentoring program with expert colleagues throughout the year can reduce teacher turnover and expenses.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Within the dramatic educational policy shift of *No Child Left Behind*, it is required that all teachers of core academic subjects be "highly qualified." This report summarizes research showing a link between teacher excellence and student achievement (Perkins-Gough, 2002). Specifically, elementary teachers with high verbal and cognitive abilities tend to lead classrooms that produce high student achievement, and secondary teachers with strong subject matter backgrounds have a greater positive effect on student performance than similar teachers without such a background.

Grant (2000) maintains that high-quality teachers today must be hired within approximately 2 weeks, and teachers in critical fields must be hired within 2 days. Grant affirms that we have to be able to move fast if we are going to acquire talented teachers in today's teachers' market. In 1997, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that thousands of qualified teachers were choosing not to teach. Darling-Hammond's (2000) research suggested that states which organize preparation, recruitment, and retention of their teachers have less of a problem finding a qualified teacher in every classroom.

Catholic school principals find themselves competing with well-orga-

ized, extensively marketed public school districts and state recruitment programs as well as other Catholic schools for top teacher candidates. With limited resources and minimal diocesan assistance, they may feel out-matched as they work to find the best candidates to fill all of their certified positions before the new school year commences. Once hired, keeping new effective teachers is a challenge. Whatever their resources, principals of Catholic schools must hone their skills in the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers to maintain their high standards of achievement. To accomplish this, it is imperative that principals critically review effective strategies currently employed by others in the field. To that end, a review of effective recruitment initiatives, alternative teacher certification programs, minority recruitment initiatives, the teacher selection process, and induction and mentoring program activities will be presented to provide assistance to Catholic school principals faced with the challenge of staffing schools with fully prepared teachers.

## **HIRING PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES**

There are over 1,600 teachers employed in the 80 elementary and secondary schools in the Catholic Archdiocese of Omaha, Nebraska. While the current methods of identifying teaching candidates is sufficient for filling many positions, there is an insufficient pool of candidates for the hard-to-staff subject areas of foreign language, upper level math, chemistry, and physics. In addition, there is a desire to increase the diversity of teachers employed in the archdiocese, the third largest school district in the state.

Although the 80 schools in the Omaha Archdiocese operate independently, the Catholic School Office sends its director of human resources to local university job fairs to provide district fliers to prospective candidates and to collect their resumés. When principals notify the director that they will have an opening in a teaching position, the director forwards the appropriate applicant's resumé to them for review. It is then the decision of the principal to grant an interview.

In addition to the assistance given by the Archdiocesan Catholic School Office, the principals attend deanery meetings where they share their teacher openings among seven or eight local schools. Principals help one another fill positions by suggesting qualified teachers they have known. Job openings are also posted in the local metropolitan and Catholic newspapers.

These employment initiatives may take several weeks before hiring is accomplished, and Catholic schools cannot match salaries offered to candidates by public schools. What can the principal do to expedite the process and effectively recruit a diverse pool of high-quality teachers?

## EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES

The distribution of teachers across states and regions is uneven. Urban and poor communities demonstrate the greatest need. While some states produce more teachers than they need and others need more than they produce, salary causes some of the discrepancies.

The state of Florida estimated their teacher need at 25,000 for the 2003-2004 school year (Thomas, 2002). Recruiters used a variety of new strategies to find new teachers. The state's annual education job fair received 20,000 hits daily to the state web site: <http://www.teachflorida.com>. Many diocesan Catholic education offices are also using web sites to promote job fairs and submit job postings.

The following web sites provide information for those looking to recruit both experienced teachers and those just entering the teaching field:

- Recruiting New Teachers (<http://www.rnt.org>) explores traditional and alternative paths to teaching. It also hosts the National Recruitment Clearinghouse (<http://www.recruitingteachers.org>).
- Flinn Scientific, a science education equipment supplier, welcomes the placement of science teacher job openings (<http://www.flinnsci.com>).
- The National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA; <http://www.ncea.org>) invites anyone to add an education-related resumé to their bank of job listings, while members of NCEA may post available positions.
- The Alliance for Catholic Education (<http://ace.nd.edu>) welcomes job postings and offers assistance to schools searching for high-quality, committed teachers.

In addition to promoting job openings on web sites, other strategies may include:

- Team-up with your diocesan Catholic education office to apprise teacher education institutions within 200 miles of vacancies.
- Host a visitation program and job fair for all interested candidates.
- Give special attention to making teacher recruitment materials as attractive and functional as possible.
- Create a colorful recruitment folder artfully decorated with photographs of teachers interacting with students.
- Be sure that the folder showcases your school's logo and motto.
- Include a map of the area, information about the selection process and application, a school calendar, and a salary schedule with benefit information.
- Include a CD (Peterson, 2002) or video that highlights outstanding student achievement and benefits of the school's location.

- Provide testimonials of how new teachers have grown professionally in the school or district.
- Mention any incentives that might encourage a candidate to select your school over another.

## ALTERNATIVE TEACHER CERTIFICATION

At least 40 states and many universities offer alternative certification for teachers, lowering the barriers to teaching by creating multiple pathways into the field. Common program requirements include a bachelor's degree, a passing score on a competency examination, a clear background check, and completion of an intensive teacher preparation program that focuses on classroom experience. After completing their preparation, teachers are usually shadowed by a mentor teacher for their first 2 years. The mentoring phase is the quintessential element needed to nurture new, inexperienced teachers. Although alternative routes to certification are receiving some criticism from teacher colleges and teacher unions, they are opening the door for talented individuals interested in becoming teachers.

How effective are they? "Several studies suggest that alternatively certified teachers produce results in the classroom that are at least as good as those of teachers with conventional licenses" (Finn & Madigan, 2001, para. 18). No data conclusively show that conventional certification programs produce better teachers than those who are alternatively certified.

Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, recently established an alternative teacher preparation program called Mentoring Academic Gifts in Service (MAGIS). The program is aimed at addressing the teacher shortage in Catholic schools. College candidates who have received a bachelor's degree from any university are recruited. The program lasts 2 years and is based upon three pillars: community, professional preparation, and spirituality. Currently, MAGIS students participate in community living, sharing a home and their faith and receiving a stipend as they work toward their degree. At the beginning of the 2-year commitment, MAGIS students take classes during the summer to prepare them to teach. Most students will be recruited to teach in under-served Catholic schools, assuming full-time teaching positions once the regular school year starts. When the school year is complete, they will return to the university for the summer and teach again in the fall. MAGIS students earn a Master of Education degree after the third summer.

The Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) is a well-known and widely respected program at the University of Notre Dame. Nationally acclaimed by the President of the United States in a valedictory address, hundreds of students compete each year for admission. Over 100 parochial schools throughout the United States receive college graduates placed through ACE. As is

the goal of the MAGIS program, ACE is aimed at improving Catholic education, especially in underprivileged areas of the United States, by enabling their talented graduates to teach in them. Students teach for 2 years and earn a graduate degree (M.Ed.) from Notre Dame.

The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program is one minority recruitment program meeting success (Islas, 2001). Interested outstanding seniors are asked to submit an application to be reviewed by a selection committee. Selected candidates are enrolled in a 4-year teacher education program, where they receive first-hand classroom experience. This is the key to the success of the program. Scholarships are awarded for those who agree to teach at the end of the program.

One teacher preparation program that is built from a diverse group of recent college graduates is Teach for America (Islas, 2001). After a rigorous screening process, liberal arts graduates are enrolled in an 8-week preparation course to help them to teach in poor rural communities and inner cities. They commit to 2 years of teaching. This program has a completion rate of 89%. More than 4,000 applicants apply for 1,000 Teacher for America slots each year, which suggests that the opportunity to teach without first going through an elaborate teacher preparation program appeals to gifted young college graduates.

Troops to Teach, aimed at placing military veterans in classrooms, began in 1994. This program offers a fast-track program like Teach for America as well as a signing bonus incentive.

Qualified candidates are entering the field from a variety of teacher education programs that amply prepare them for the rigor of teaching. Many accredited institutions offer high-quality alternative routes to prepare teachers and meet state licensing requirements. A directory of alternative teacher preparation programs from accredited institutions is available from NCATE (<http://www.ncate.org>).

## A DISTRICT MINORITY RECRUITMENT INITIATIVE

Attending to the needs of all students requires a diverse teaching staff. Many principals may have had little experience in minority teacher recruitment. What can be learned from others who have been faced with the same recruitment challenge?

In research on minority teaching recruitment and retention in the Omaha Public School District in Nebraska, Hodges (1997) identified the district visitation experience as a major component of the minority teacher recruitment process. The district solicited area businesses and wrote grants to underwrite some of the expenses. The recruitment visitation provided candidates an orientation to the Omaha Public Schools and the city of Omaha and also pro-

vided personnel administrators the opportunity to take a close look at candidates in the school environment.

Factors impacting candidate decisions to accept teaching positions included: a friendly informative recruiter, follow-up communication (letters, notes, and phone calls), the information provided about the district (about the students, facilities, salaries and benefits), and the reputation of the school district (Hodges, 1997). Teachers who chose to continue teaching in Omaha reported that they were also influenced by the excellent support they received through mentoring and grade-level meetings. Candidates from neighboring states had fewer adjustments to make to climate and distance from home (Hodges, 1997).

Making extraordinary efforts to include all talented candidates of different ethnic and economic backgrounds can minimize social inequality in schools. Principals desiring a more diverse faculty must consider how well minorities are represented among their teachers, and whether there are any issues that may deter minority candidates from applying to their schools.

Catholic high schools are teaming with Catholic universities to recruit and retain minority teachers. The Department of Education of Xavier University in New Orleans, Louisiana, has developed the Future Teachers Club Program with Catholic high schools in New Orleans. The program, sponsored by teachers in each school, operates to encourage high achieving Black students in 11th grade to consider a teaching career. Students shadow teachers and participate in peer-tutoring. The university coordinates the tutoring of elementary and middle school classes by the club members.

In addition to hosting a visitation of the school for minority candidates, and proceeding with follow up after recruitment, Peterson (2002) recommends the following additional strategies for minority recruitment:

- Use the Internet and teacher listing services
- Involve minority recruiters.
- Advertise in publications with a large minority readership.
- Recruit at colleges and universities with particular diverse populations.
- Send job announcements and recruitment materials to religious centers, political action groups (NAACP chapters), and clubs.

## **THE TEACHER SELECTION PROCESS**

Smith and Knab (1996) reported on the practices in the teacher selection process that they consider the most efficient, reliable, and valid. Their research finds that the best hiring practices

- Identify those attitudes, behaviors, and skills that characterize the kind of teachers most wanted in classrooms;
- Validate the selection process to ensure that it indeed predicts excellence in classroom and professional performance;

- Streamline the paperwork so that candidates have confidence in the speed and skill of the system recruiting them;
- Reserve the time-intensive personal evaluations for the most promising candidates;
- Provide prompt, accessible, and accurate information to candidates at all stages of the hiring process;
- Provide decision-makers in the hiring process accurate and timely information about the process and results.

Principals participating in the study by Swinehart and Kay (1997) identified that their own teacher selection process was in need of revision, citing the following as challenges: limited training on how to select teachers, limited time to screen candidates, and the inability to recruit candidates of color or candidates in particular subject areas.

Some common mistakes made in teacher hiring include: narrow hiring criteria, failure to emphasize academic criteria, failure to assess applicant's work with students, hiring based on physical appearance of applicant, unchecked prejudices, and all interested parties not involved in hiring (Peterson, 2002).

A calendar schedule of activities can provide principals with an organized schedule to guide their search for high-quality new teachers (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Calendar of Recruitment and Hiring Activities* (Adapted from Clement, 2000)

Months	Activities
September-December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Request training if necessary to become knowledgeable in the hiring process.</li> <li>▪ Review last year's process. Adjust as needed.</li> <li>▪ Project staff needs for next year.</li> <li>▪ Inform/train staff who will be involved in the hiring process.</li> <li>▪ Contact teacher training institutions and volunteer to visit classes of soon-to-be graduates.</li> <li>▪ Make arrangements for student teacher placements in your school.</li> <li>▪ Schedule spring visits for recruiting and interviewing at campus career centers.</li> </ul>
January-February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to project and analyze staff needs for next year.</li> <li>▪ Begin to develop profiles of your ideal candidate for specific positions.</li> </ul>
March-April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attend job fairs and college and university recruitment activities.</li> <li>▪ Review paperwork of candidates and schedule interviews.</li> </ul>
May-July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complete interviewing and hiring.</li> <li>▪ Contact candidates who are <i>not</i> offered positions.</li> <li>▪ Send welcome letters to new hires.</li> </ul>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complete hiring for last-minute openings.</li> <li>▪ Check to make sure all new hires understand personnel policies and benefits.</li> <li>▪ Begin induction for new teachers.</li> </ul>

## **APPLICATION EVALUATION AND THE INTERVIEW**

The best way to start sorting through applications is to decide what skills, experiences, and education will make an ideal candidate. It is also helpful to have a team working with the principal to identify, process, and eventually hire the best candidate. A generic rating document like the one that follows can

be used to evaluate paperwork. The cover letter and resume must show a quality of written expression and true interest in the specific job advertised and contain a few relevant facts that make the candidate stand out. Research indicates that grades reflect attendance and commitment, as well as effort; so a careful consideration of an applicant's transcript is in order (Clement, 2000).

<b>Applicant Paperwork Evaluation</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Position:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Skills:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Experience needed:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cover letter</b>	Score (high of 4)
Indicates candidate understands the position	_____
High readability (grammar, punctuation, spelling, signature)	_____
Professionalism and drive	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Resumé</b>	
High readability (grammar, punctuation, spelling, signature)	_____
Experience in teaching or student teaching is appropriate	_____
Educational background is appropriate	_____
Attention to detail	_____
No unaccounted gaps in educational and professional experience	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Transcript</b>	
Grades are consistently high	_____
Course work is in:	 _____  _____
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Letters of recommendation strongly recommend the candidate</b>	
Letter #1	_____
Letter #2	_____
Letter #3	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Specific Experiences</b>	
Certification	_____
Past teaching experience	_____
Portfolio	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Test Scores (e.g. Praxis, GRE)</b>	_____

Figure 1. Rating document for evaluating applicant paperwork (Adapted from Clement, 2000).

Catholic school principals need to be cognizant of legal issues that are unique to religious educational institutions. The United States Constitution and statutory law support the First Amendment right for religious educational institutions to hire members of their own religious preference. Given the Catholic identity of schools, administrators have a right and duty to inform potential employees of the expectation that the applicants fulfill the mission of the Catholic Church and the school prior to employee appointment, so that a clear understanding of responsibilities and obligations is established. While specific statutory exemptions in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 allow for the lawful hiring of persons of a particular religion when the school's curriculum is directed toward the propagation of a particular religion, it does not allow the religious institution to discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, and national origin.

The best interview program includes two to three individual interviews, followed by a group session composed of the administrator and teachers (Peterson, 2002). About 70% of the interviewer's questions should be competency-based, focusing on instructional skills, professional knowledge, classroom behavior, and interpersonal skills.

When evaluating answers, Pawlas (1995) offers the STAR (situation, task, action, and result) approach. For any situation, the applicant would be expected to describe a situation, the task at hand, the action taken, and the result.

Clement (2000) identifies the basic elements of the interview. It is important to remember that the interview is a two-way street. While the principal and interview team are evaluating the candidate, the candidate is evaluating the school. Making eye contact, smiling, and reacting positively to the candidate will help to make the interview a positive experience with likely contract acceptance to follow.

### **Elements of the Interview**

- Introductions and ice-breaker questions

#### **Competency Based Questions**

- Curriculum and instruction
- Planning
- Classroom organization and management
- Homework and grading
- Meeting individual student needs
- Communication with parents, colleagues, and administrators
- Professional growth
- Open-ended questions for sharing strengths and experiences

#### **Interview Closing**

- Selling the school and district
- Conclusion of the interview
- Post-interview reflection by interviewers

Professional dress \_\_\_\_\_

Arrive on time? \_\_\_\_\_

Overall social skills? \_\_\_\_\_

Professional competence and caring for children? \_\_\_\_\_

*Figure 2.* Elements of the interview (Adapted from Clement, 2000).

## **RETAINING HIGH-QUALITY TEACHERS**

Some researchers believe that teacher staffing problems are caused not so much by the insufficient supply of quality teachers but by “too many teachers leaving teaching” (Ingersoll, 1997, p. 44). Studies have indicated that one-fourth of all beginning teachers leave the classroom within the first 4 years (Hare & Heap, 2001). The highest turnover rate of up to 50% may be reported in schools located in high-poverty areas.

Teacher turnover requires a sustained amount of financial resources and energies to develop new teachers and bring them on board. This turnover can undermine school reforms which require a sustained and shared commitment by school staff (Voke, 2002).

Student learning is also disadvantaged. Research shows that new teachers are less effective at producing student learning than more experienced teachers (Hawley, 2000). Ingersoll (2001) argues that "teacher recruitment programs alone will not solve the staffing problems of schools if they do not also address the organizational sources of low retention" (p. 501).

The reasons teachers leave their positions vary according to context. Teachers in rural schools cite reasons related to geography, culture, and professional isolation. Teachers in urban schools are least satisfied with their access to teaching resources and control over curriculum and pedagogy (Claycomb, 2000). In small private schools, teachers are dissatisfied with salaries and with their school's administration (Collins, 1999).

According to the report from the U.S. Department of Education (2000), new teachers are often faced with overwhelming workloads, are frequently assigned the most difficult students, are asked to teach multiple subjects, are forced to teach classes for which they are not certified, and are expected to oversee extracurricular activities. While most new teachers are formally assigned mentors, new faculty have few and limited opportunities to interact with their mentors (Johnson et al., 2001).

Research shows the primary reason new teachers enter teaching is for the intrinsic reward of engaging in meaningful work with children or love of a particular subject area. It is speculated that when receipt of intrinsic rewards is thwarted, due to student discipline problems or insufficient autonomy in the classroom, teachers become less willing to tolerate the low salaries and lack of public respect (Goodlad, 1984). The following are policies recommended by researchers and analysts:

- Create, fund, and sufficiently schedule high-quality induction programs for new teachers. Darling-Hammond reports that "beginning teachers who have access to intensive mentoring by expert colleagues are much less likely to leave teaching in the early years" (2000, p. 29). These programs will encourage teachers to stay in the profession and improve their competency.
- Develop peer review evaluations that focus on improving the performance of new teachers while providing professional development directed toward their specialized needs (Darling-Hammond, 2000).
- Adopt policies that place experienced teachers with students of greatest needs. Provide new teachers with release time to observe their mentors. Limit extracurricular responsibilities of new teachers (Goodwin, 1999).
- Include teachers in school-based decision and policy making (Ingersoll, 2001).
- Encourage graduates and paraprofessionals already familiar with your school environment to become certified (Collins, 1999). Since they are already working in the schools, they have had experience with the

school culture and with today's student. Some of these participants come from ethnic groups under-represented in the professions (Simmons, 2000).

- Support policies that reduce class size and increase funding for training and quality resources.

## INDUCTION PROGRAMS

Induction programs are planned staff development for new teachers. This includes orientation, peer observations and evaluations, support groups, seminars, and mentoring. Research indicates that teachers who did not participate in an induction program in their schools were nearly twice as likely to leave their classroom as those who had participated in such a program (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). During the first 5 years of teaching, mentoring programs can reduce the teacher dropout rate from 50% to 15% (Scherer, 2000). California and Texas report that their induction programs retain more beginning teachers, thus enabling the states to realize appreciable savings associated with hiring, orienting, and evaluating new teachers (National Association of State Boards of Education, 1998).

Most consider the induction period to be the first 3 years on the job (Brewster & Railsback, 2001). During these years new teachers should be appropriately paired with a trained mentor. Some considerations when pairing new teachers with mentors include:

- New teachers should not be paired with an immediate supervisor.
- Mentees benefit most when their mentors teach the same grade level and/or subject area.
- Mentors need to see the beginning teacher as a developing professional to whom they provide quality support.

The following is a proposed calendar of induction/mentoring activities to guide a new teacher's first year (adapted from Smith, 2001).

Table 2

*First Year-Long Induction/Mentoring Program Activities*

Month	Activity
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Select mentor-trainees from each department/or grade level that is expecting a new teacher for the upcoming school year.</li> </ul>
Preparation Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Request funding (stipend for mentors) or incentives for a 3-year mentor-mentee program from the school finance committee. Justify expenditure by sharing benefit list to students, school, and teachers.</li> <li>▪ Plan calendar to include a single monthly early dismissal for upcoming year. This time will be allocated for grade level/department meetings, and mentor/mentee meetings. (If possible adjust school day so that this occurs weekly.)</li> </ul>
August Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Two weeks before school starts meet with mentor-trainees and instruct them with standards-based teaching techniques, guidelines, policies, and procedures that are essentials of a good mentor based upon research. Set goals and expectations, which will include keeping a Mentor Log of the program's progress.</li> <li>▪ Provide new teacher orientation (day 1) on school culture, discipline program, standards-based teaching techniques, policies, and procedures.</li> <li>▪ Continue new teacher orientation (day 2), providing information on modes of evaluation and observation and individualized plans for growth. Plan an introduction luncheon for mentors and mentees and provide the remainder of the day for them to work together. Mentors should assist mentors in establishing goals for the upcoming year. Mentors should share any curriculum specific materials with the new teacher.</li> <li>▪ Host a staff social before school starts. Ask mentors and mentees to introduce each other.</li> <li>▪ Mentors will meet with mentees the day before school starts to provide final assistance as needed.</li> </ul>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meet with mentors and mentees to discuss expectations. Set agenda for their monthly meeting to include opportunities to share and solve problems, observe each other, discuss lesson planning, review teaching standards, and team teach if possible.</li> <li>▪ Identify timely issues of interest, such as the means by which teachers complete the first mid-quarter grading period, and preparations for open house.</li> <li>▪ Informally observe mentee by principal and provide feedback.</li> <li>▪ Mentor observation of mentee with feedback.</li> </ul>

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October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Mentee observation of mentor with discussion.</li><li>▪ Monthly meeting of mentor and mentee will prepare for parent-teacher conferences, prepare to complete quarter grades, and review classroom management.</li><li>▪ Principal meets with mentors and mentees to review formal observation expectations and brainstorm for needs and progress.</li><li>▪ Mentee attends any new teacher staff development offered by the diocese.</li></ul>
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Mentee will observe other teacher in an area of interest.</li><li>▪ Principal and mentee have pre-observation conference.</li><li>▪ Principal formally observes mentee.</li><li>▪ Principal and mentee have post-observation conference.</li><li>▪ Agenda for mentor/mentee meeting includes parent/student contacts and discipline.</li></ul>
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Mentor/mentee meeting to include end of semester project suggestions, final examination preparation, and grade reporting.</li></ul>
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Principal meets formally with mentor and mentee and reviews Mentor Log. Cover any schedule change issues associated with the new semester.</li><li>▪ Mentee observes teacher in area of interest outside of teaching area.</li><li>▪ Mentors and mentees plan one team teaching activity. Mentors should discuss resources from professional organizations at this month's meeting.</li><li>▪ Principal informally observes mentee.</li></ul>
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Mentor and mentee meet and plan to observe each other before final formal observation of mentee. Share problems and concerns. Revisit goals and evaluation format. Prepare a lesson for a formal observation.</li><li>▪ <u>Pre-observation meeting with mentee and principal.</u></li><li>▪ Formal observation of mentee by principal.</li><li>▪ Post-observation of mentee by principal. Goal review. Discuss mentor/mentee program successes and shortcomings for mentor.</li></ul>

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March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Mentor and mentees meet with principal for program review. Mentor Logs are shared and presented. Suggestions for future program shared: what worked and what did not work.</li></ul>
Conclusion Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Determine if mentor/mentee pairing will work for next year.</li><li>▪ Mentor and mentee should plan for parent-teacher conferences.</li><li>▪ Principal will discuss with mentor upcoming contract issues for the next year.</li></ul>
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Mentor and mentee should meet to discuss budget issues and revisions for next year, ordering of materials for next year, and textbook selection for next year. Make plans for completion of semester in terms of parent contacts, grades, and final reporting.</li></ul>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Principal has end of the year meeting for all mentors and mentees. Celebrates accomplishments and collaboration. Shares goal of action research and continued collaboration for upcoming school year.</li><li>▪ Mentor shares final end of the year expectations for mentee in terms of graduation ceremonies and teacher check-out.</li></ul>

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The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) has developed an on-line course entitled *Surviving and Thriving in Your First Year of Teaching* ([http://pdonline.ascd.org/pd\\_online](http://pdonline.ascd.org/pd_online)) to help new teachers adjust to the realities and challenges of the classroom in the first few years.

While schools cannot respond to every situation that may cause teachers to leave the profession, they can focus on two major issues: the strain of dealing with student behavior problems and feelings of professional isolation (Weissbourd, 2003). In addition, disillusionment, the loss of a belief that they can make a difference in students' lives, is one of the main reasons that nearly one-half of teachers in the United States leave the profession within their first 5 years ("Quality Counts," 2000). Mentoring programs can make the difference. Mentors can help beginning teachers develop confidence, encouraging them to take pride in new accomplishments. Mentors can assist teachers as they develop talents through diverse career paths within the teaching profession, enabling them to be more effective with students.

Research suggests that the ability to use one's talents and grow professionally is more important than status or salary in boosting a teacher's morale (Heath, 1994). Career opportunities for teachers can include the ability to create programs, to conduct research, to take sabbaticals in the private sector, and to assume leadership roles (Weissbourd, 2003).

## CONCLUSION

Fully aware of the relationship between teacher excellence and student achievement, the rapid pace of teacher placement, and the large number of certified teachers leaving the profession in the first 4 years, Catholic school principals must advance their skills in the recruitment, hiring, and retention of high-quality teachers. Keeping good teachers should be an important goal for all principals.

Effective teacher recruitment includes an outreach to universities who sponsor traditional and alternative teacher certification programs within a 200-mile radius. Effective teacher recruitment requires the development of attractive recruitment materials, a promotional CD, and the hosting of school visitations within a diocese. Recruitment can begin with an early outreach program to middle and high school students and the targeting of mid-career professionals. An active diocesan web site can be developed to promote and support teacher placement. Catholic school offices can assist their administrators by maintaining a list of web sites that support teacher recruitment, especially for minority teachers and specific subject area positions. Principals must continue to seek information about the best recruitment and hiring practices. These best practices include following a suggested calendar of recruitment and hiring activities, utilizing a rating document to evaluate an applicant's paperwork, and conducting multiple interviews which include teacher colleagues in the interview process.

Effective administrators must remain sensitive to reasons why teachers leave their positions and make efforts to mitigate them. Resourceful administrators strive to provide their teachers with needed materials and give them the opportunity to control curriculum and pedagogy. They prevent their new teachers from being faced with overwhelming workloads and limit their extracurricular responsibilities. They are the teachers' advocates for better salaries, and they provide an engaging mentoring program with frequent opportunities for interaction with expert mentors. Effective administrators also support and train teachers in the management of discipline problems so that teachers will remain engaged in meaningful work with students; it is this interaction, above others, that draws the talented to the teaching profession.

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